

## David Carmadelle

Interviewer: Earl Robichaux

Earl Robichaux: Okay. Can you tell us your name and uh, date of birth? And where we are now.

Roger Carmadelle: Alright – I'm David Carmadelle. I was born in 1956, and um, born and raised in Grand Isle, and you know um, I come from a good family. My father and all moved here in 1946, 1947, Was a fisherman. Um, lived in Cheniere Caminada. Um, the old family – the whole family was fishermen at the time – on both sides. On my mother's side and my father's side. And uh, having a shrimp boat, still having a shrimp boat, um, learning the uh, the waters off of Grand Isle. I think I know them better at night than in the daytime. No radar, no spotlights, whatever. Um, I think sometimes the Coast Guard still uses me to go on rescues at night, and they got radars, they got whatever the modern equipment – we don't need all that. Just go for that light. Haha. But um, you know, just being a Cajun guy, you know, just, just uh, um, born and raised around the waters and learning um, the hard way of life and the easy way of life – the way I look at it. It's um – I guess you know, all we want to do is make a living on the waters and it's like a farmer from up north, and we're farmers of the sea, and you give us a – we know what type of nets, and what type of equipment we need to crab, to fish. Type – any type of species to catch, what we were raised in the waters. Um, I can remember um, my grandfather when I was a young boy um, he was a – I was at my grandmother's and they had a gumbo and stuff, they was on Sundays the families would get together to cook. And I can remember there was an American flag that was behind the wall of my grandfather's in the living room – and I asked my grandmother – I said what's that flag? Why every year they got a new flag, um, that's pinned against the wall right there? And I knew what the American flag was about, but I mean I - she was like – looked like she was swapping them out. Being new every year. And she said well she said your grandfather's a fisherman, and she said that uh, the shrimp sheds used to pick the best fisherman that caught the best fish – the shrimp – most shrimp at the time. And I said well I said Pa-Pa, my grandfather had the American Flag. And she said, yeah. She said he won it this year. He wins it pretty regular catching the most shrimp. And you know, and um, you know, um, it's an honor. You know and he's a true fisherman, and I looked at her, and I said, you know, I'm kind of confused. I see the American flag, we say the pledge every day, and we were raised. That's our flag. And I said, it made me feel good as a little boy, and I couldn't wait to get my shrimp boat to say one day I might get the flag. So over the years, um, he won one year, and the next fisherman down the line won another year, and you know, and I'd ask, I said, well grandfather's getting a little old, he's not putting hours he used to put in, and you got younger generations that's coming in. Um, at the same time, I couldn't wait anymore. By the time I got my shrimp boat in the early – well my brother and I, we started, my brother was fourteen, I was probably ten years old. Um, ten, twelve years old. And we used to get out get off the school bus and take our good clothes off. My momma couldn't wait anymore, and we'd tell her we're going shrimping. So we got on a little skiff every evening after school – couldn't wait no more to go shrimping, and right there in the backyard. And um, we uh, we tried to make a dollar. We were learning if you could make a dollar, you know, we uh, we'd have some money and maybe we could save for a car one day when we're in highschool. Whatever, you know. Um, and then my grandmother uh, I remember her coming out off the uh, wharf and she's saying uh, she's telling me she says, you boys

be careful. Um, I know your daddy's got a bigger shrimp boat. If you hook your nets, ya'll be careful. And we said, Maw Maw, don't worry about nothing. We're gonna swim – if we hook our nets, we're not gonna go with our shirts on to swim, get our buttons hooked on the nets to drown. I said we'll swim back to the canal, to the – which is the marina today, but to the canal, and Maw Maw, we'll climb up on the cement slab like two otters and we'll make sure that maybe Dad'll come with the big boat to unhook the net. Um, sure enough, one evening we, we hooked the net, and we wind up swimming, now we're talking about outside the canal just shrimping, playing, two teenagers, you know. Um, and we catch fifty, sixty pounds of shrimp then a year, and I was you know, whatever it was, that was some money for us whatever it was. But the bottom line – we wind up swimming looked like three or four times a week hooking up our nets and our dad would come, and we'd swim – my grandma at that time had no phones – we'd go over and get my dad to come with the big boat and unhook us. And she said, you boys better not drown. You be careful. And we always knew not to go swimming inside the nets because with your button on your shirt you'll get hooked, and one of us will drown. Said anyway, we uh, my dad decided to get us a skiff built. And guess what the name of the skiff was. Tarzan. Because my grandma said ya'll like Tarzan. And Tarzan's in the jungle or whatever, but ya'll swim and ya'll on the water's ya'll like all around nature, and ya'll respect the waters, and I'm glad that ya'll listening to us. So as we got older, um, we learned to shrimp, to crab, to fish, and learn the ways to make a living. Um, then we helped our dads, and at that time – my dad, and my brother and I – finished school, and um, went to trade school and graduated from trade school, my brother went to college and came back, and um, because shrimping was good in the 70s and 80s. It was real good. Um, I wind up buying me a shrimp boat because my whole family on both sides were shrimpers, and I had a degree in refrigeration and air conditioning, but it was so plentiful, and um, I knew the money I could make, and I remember talking to one of my uncles, and I said uh, I need about 35,000. I said I got about 5,000 saved. I said, would you help me finance a shrimp boat? He said we'll go to the bank tomorrow. And um, we went to the bank, and borrowed the money and starting working. In those days, if you remember the interest was 18%, 19%. So I was a young man, and I gambled and I uh, took that high interest and I went to work, and I worked day and night on that 50-foot shrimp boat. Um, and you know, that was married, got married, and had a family to raise, and built a home, and uh, worked day and night, and had my kids and family. And just worked at high interest and then got involved you know, and real serious with the - listening to the complaints that the fishermen - in the early 80s, that's when the TEDs device came out.

R: Mmhmm.

C: And you know, the Cajun boys, we couldn't understand the people along Coastal Louisiana and really from Florida, um, the fishermen in that area were getting hit hard at that time. And you know, a coonass – I mean, you know, we want to do the right thing, and we want to make sure we abide by the laws, but you know what? We're not stupid. You know, if you, if you gonna charge me for something that I ain't doing – a coonass ain't gonna tolerate that. And what happened is the federal government got involved, and I could remember them pushing the turtle excluding device, um, in the early 80s I remember taking my credit card and taking my dad and my deckhands and going with 23 other fishermen to Washington, D.C. to fight the turtle excluding device. I wanted to meet an environmentalist, which we didn't know what an environmentalist was in the time, and we wanted to –they were saying that we were killing all

kinds of turtles. And they wasn't true, you know, I mean, there's no way. So we finally went to Washington, and we uh, we went together, and I remember my dad saying, son, they're gonna bury us. They're gonna kill us. This is – our living is over with. And I said dad, I said no, we're gonna fight. We're gonna fight. Um, we finally made it to Washington, and I never forgot that. We got off the train – we had some orange and white caps. And they said, "TOPS, stop TEDs". Well they had a bunch of old ladies around the train when we got off there. And they were hollering at us – ya'll coming here to fight Ted Kennedy. That's not gonna happen – that's our favorite senator. And it wasn't like that at all. We trying to explain to the lady – but anyway, we went testify in front of Washington, and um, I'll never forget that. They had a mail bag full of mail of people all over the United States not educated, meaning that the Cajuns are killing – or the Louisiana fishermen are killing the turtles alone that are nesting on the beaches in Grand Isle every hundred feet, which was not true. So there was all kind of paperwork - they were dumping the mailbags, and the lady was saying, this is what's happening in Louisiana. So we finally got around the end – at the time the mayor was Tommy Marullo representing the fishermen from Grand Isle. Um, him and I, we really got the rest of the fishermen – we stayed back and we wanted to talk to this lady and say, we need to educate you a little bit. We need to invite you to the town. We need to bring you. And anyway, um, we told her we'd pick her up in New Orleans and come and to come see what kind of Cajun – what kind of work we do and how hard we work. And reminding you – we don't want the government to feed us – we just want to get up in the morning and go to work in our (inaudible) yards and work, and we're not killing these things. Lady never showed up. Um, government stuck it down our throats. Um, we bought the TEDs. We put them in. we had to go to like – looked like – start school again and tell the Cajuns sewing your nets, and trying to get your dad and your grandfather and everybody to tell you that we're killing and I don't want to tell you the words they used for the turtles, but we wasn't killing these things. It wasn't true.

R: They just weren't there.

C: They weren't there. And so anyway, we put these things every type of turtle excluding device – I spent a fortune. Um, but at like two o'clock in the morning, we had, I never thought that the federal government would sent a Coast Guard to come in and board your boat and tell you with machine guns and tell you they want you to pick up your nets, um, and we want you to – we want to check your turtle excluding device and see if it's open or closed. Which I had no problem. So um, losing about 25 to 35 percent of your shrimp catch with this thing open. And knowing that you're not catching no turtles, knowing that you got a family to raise, knowing that you're paying 18% interest – knowing that you gotta pay the fuel and you got notes, and you're worried about everything, and the government's coming to tell you that because of the turtles...

R: What do you think the future of shrimping is?

C: The future shrimping um, and if you know, in the last few years with the price of diesel, they would – it's terrible. Now with the turtle excluding device, and you know, that's what really got me involved in politics. I said I really gotta get involved in these fisherman that help the oil field. We gotta stand up and fight, and we gotta do the right thing, and get educate these people– come in and invite them. But honestly between the – to answer your question, I feel the imports are killing us. You could go to the,

the biggest supermarkets – I’m not gonna mention no names, but I was there the other day, and you know uh, the import of shrimp is there, it’s all nicely packed, um, 21, 25, looks beautiful shrimp, and it’s in my – I would never eat it. I tried to eat it a couple times. It’s a mushy, mushy shrimp. To me, there’s no laws in the other countries, and we did come and fight all this, and we testified, and I bet you – I testified against major franchises that sell it – but anyway, I was being honest with you. As of today, last night, passing on the Caminada Bridge, it brought back memories to me. I had tears in my eyes last night, believe it or not. About 9 o’clock. Behind Cheniere Caminada, when I was a little boy at night, it brought back memories saying, look my boys out there. Um, I know the shrimp price is not right, but the fuel went down. They got families to feed. But it was like a city. Now if you would’ve came two years ago and asked me the same question, it was a ghost town. So whenever the oil business is not booming, your shrimpers have to make a living. They have families – Louisiana boys. Families. Men and women. So the oilfield goes down, and there’s a good shrimp season, they run back and they go shrimping.

R: Well let me ask you this.

C: Mmhmm.

R: I’ve always heard, you know, people mentioned Chinatown. So I in my mind, I’m thinking that’s different from Manila Village, right?

C: Exactly.

R: So Chinatown was pretty much the Filipinos on Caminada.

C: Exactly. Um, Chinatown in my experience is – I could remember the Collins – Mr. Robert Collins, uh, Senior, and then Robert and Ricky and Johnny – they ran Chinatown through their ancestors – their grandfather, great-grandfather, um, I could remember a Borne um, and watching the cement slabs and the dried shrimp um, they would, they would, I can – I can remember they had them laid out in the sun and then when the weather would rain, they would put tarpoleons on top so they wouldn’t get mushy, and I wasn’t too familiar with the process, but I remember of the shrimp being laid out on the cement. Then through the years, the Collins families worked big dryers. It looked like big dryers that you go to the Laundromat.

R: Mmhmm.

C: And throw them in there.

R: Tumble them.

C: Yeah. Tumble them. And then I remember the Chinamen till lately coming in, and Robert would load them sacks up of dried shrimp, and sell them to the Chinamen in New Orleans. And he just quit um, Katrina wiped it out. His plant, if I remember right. Um...

R: Well were they really Chinamen? Or Filipino?

C: Well they - the Filipino's – in the early – when Manila Village, and I mean with the right across um, Manila Village across from uh, I want to say Manila Village, but it wasn't. It was where across from Bayou Rigaud right here. They got a lot of history right there on Fifi Island.

R: Mmhmm.

C: And, and the Filipinos were there, and I remember um, my dad and Mr. Robert Collins Sr. – his dad, and they would talk about – they had them working for them. The Filipinos in Cheniere Caminada. That's right. Yes. I remember it. As far as me, um, they might've had some - I remember some Chinamen and some Filipinos there working for Mr. Collins when I was a little boy.

R: Yeah.

C: And they were still drying shrimp on the cement slab.

R: Yeah. You see, I interviewed your Uncle Roger...

C: Yeah, he..

R: You know, we talked about that a bit, and I know Bobby could say a lot to that. But I was always told it was a certain kind of shrimp called seabob.

C: Exactly.

R: You know...

C: And seabob um, I love – I used to love to catch that. The - you gotta catch tons of them, and I guess it wasn't so much about the money. It was just that you load your boat, you come in, and I guess it was just a thrill to me.

R: So how would you catch them?

C: Well, you would go on a, when the cold weather would come in, we'd put different nettings on, meaning smaller mash, put a lot of weight on your nets. Um, and for straggle slower, and you know, they kind of hang around the gutter like, and they punch the...

R: They were near the beach, huh?

C: ... and they love the shoreline of the beach. And you know, your first cold snap in December, you know, the first week in December, and it looked like that would – that would uh, that was – you had to watch it. And then during the holidays you could...

R: Well does they come in from deeper water?

C: Yes.

R: Uh huh.

C: And they look like, they look like the little river shrimp. Little river, and that's the kinds of shrimp you buy in packs from that they paid me fifteen cents, twenty cents a pound.

R: It's good for you - except all the salt.

C: Yeah, yeah. Um, but they – it's a – through the years, the seabobs, um, you never know. Some years you got a good year, some years you have a bad year. But uh, they really uh, they're good Wintertime shrimp and that's what they use it for. To dry them.

R: Well I was told by certain people that I'm lumping this all into like farming and fishing. So some people have said, well you know, um, in my mind, in the early um, 1900s or 19<sup>th</sup> century with the early 1800s, there appeared to be a lot of farming.

C: Exactly.

R: And then in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was also a lot of farming.

R: Exactly.

R: So could you talk a little bit about that?

C: And I'm glad you brought that up because yesterday, um, we had a, a team of uh, engineers. I applied for some stimulus money to bring back the natural trees.

R: Mmhmm.

C: And the first question they asked me yesterday was how, how's your dirt on your island? And I said, believe it or not, I said in the 1800s, they used to – I remember the stories where they used to grow the cucumbers on the middle of the island, and they used to bring them to the French market. And the dirt – when I was a little boy, we used to go get some good dirt. My dad wanted some good dirt. Come on the heart of the island, which is right here on the back side of the town hall. Um, where you see the vegetative oak trees. And they would grow the oranges in the 1800s on the beach. I've seen maps of that – on the beach. Right where you get off from crossing the bridge all along the beach they had orange groves. It's hard to imagine today. You know, that today, in order to put orange trees, you need a mound of good dirt.

R: Oh, well you know, (inaudible) probably like the sand.

C: Exactly. Um, then the people that plant oranges and any type of fruits on the island, it really grows quick, you know, and they, and I remember the stories, you know my grandmother and all tell me that uh, that used to be the cucumber capital of the world – they used to bring them and bring them to the...

R: French Market.

C: ... and my dad and all were crabbing.

R: What about watermelon?

C: Watermelon – um, I remember stories where Mr. Bobby Santini used to tell me, he's on the Levee Board, and he'd be a good guy too to interview.

R: Yeah.

C: He's a character though.

R: Yeah. Haha I know Bobby.

C: Yeah, but he's a good character.

B: Yeah.

C: But the idea was um, he used to talk about um, they used to um, Mr. - Old Man Ludwig had raised – you know, his um, ducks and they had horses and cattle here. And he had sugarcane over here. You know, and that's some of the stories that I remember, you know, with the Indians in the early 1800s and especially where I live at –Caminada, Cheniere Caminada. Um, but the 1893 storm, that was an experience for me, October the first, listening to my great-grandmother, as a little boy, then my grandmother and then my mother, you know, on my mother's side, our relatives, we lost some of my mother's relatives on that side.

R: Well we'll get to that in a minute – could you talk about prior to the storm? You know, what the island would've looked like, and you know, first of all, it's well known for the resorts that were here, and then there was the Yellow Fever epidemic in New Orleans, and I heard that some of the hotels were turned to cabins for you know, people, you know....

C: You're talking about the storms about the storms like the Grand Hotel like in 1800s and...

R: Yeah.

C: Yeah, that was all wiped out, but believe it or not, the railroad tracks - they still got some railroad tracks that come through the marsh on the back side – I think it's Cherry Street – in that area there. And um, they used to pick them all up off the boat the way I understood. Um, say a couple people come from New Orleans by boat. They wanted to see Grand Isle. They used to pick them up and put them on a trolley. And trolley them across the beach. And enjoy the beach and then trolley them back. And if you notice what's very familiar – I think the best street since the wagon days and the trolleys that still has the tunnels of all the streets is Cott Street right behind the Starfish. Um, you go down Cott Street, all your oak trees are all covered like a funnel. And you could see where they – I guess the wagons used to come through from the back of the island.

R: Wow. I see a little bit of that – on Coulon Rigaud?

C: Yeah, but that's a wide range, and then Ludwig is the same way – the street you just came down.

R: Yeah.

C: But if you go down Cott, it's right by the tennis court by the Starfish? You get a good picture of that. you can see the tunnel that you're going in – it's real, real narrow, to trees against the asphalt. Very nice.

R: So is it safe to say that once sugarcane got depleted, sugarcane was raised on Grand Isle?

C: Yes.

R: But never on Cheniere Caminada.

C: Exactly.

R: So once it got depleted, it became farming and fishing community?

C: Well you had your farmers and fishing, you know, you had like uh, Mr. Landry, uh Jean Landry's father-in-law and all of them – they was oyster fishermen, they were farmers, they had cows, I mean they took care of themselves in every way.

R: Trappers.

C: Trappers – my father was a trapper too at the same time. Um, my father was trapping in Cheniere Caminada. And then in wintertime he was a fisherman, in the summertime, whatever. He did what he had to do.

R: I was told they had a lot of mink and....

C: My father – I remember going with my dad and I remember um, I remember 'coon was trapped in – in the trap, and I had a stick in my hand, and my brother was running the other trap, and a 'coon reminds me – a raccoon reminds me of a human being. If somebody's coming to hit you with a stick, I still remember that scene – I couldn't hit him. He did like this – he put his little hands like "please don't hit me." And you know I couldn't kill that 'coon. And that cured me from not becoming a trapper. I told my daddy I just couldn't handle it, so he comes behind me and he hit him over the head, and he told me to throw it in the sack. And that really, really – ever till today when I look at a 'coon, I think about it. He just looked at me and he just like, "Mr. please don't kill me." He just flexed. It's like if I'm laying on the ground you got a stick, and I'm looking at you eyeball away. And that was one of the memories –

R: They're probably chimpanzees though. I don't trust them.

C: No, no. now if I had to come in and – you know I learned something too about a 'coon too. If he's in the corner of a building, you're trying to get him out, it's a nightmare to get him out. If he's in an attic – they love attics. And they love their babies in the attics – they're protected. But let me tell you – to get them out, uh, the only way to get them out, you gotta smoke them out or something, you know.

R: Well let me ask you this while we're on the subject of fishing and shrimping. Um, like for instance, Roger had told me well, they caught Spanish mackerel in the passes, um, shellfish, swordfish, can you think of any species that were abundant in the passes?

C: And you know, I'm glad you brought that up. We used – my dad used to take us fishing for the Spanish mackerel right there in Caminada Pass. Today you don't even see that. And we used to fish the rodeos. He said, come on boys. And we had a little spoon with a little yellow feather. And me and my brother – we went – we thought my daddy was crazy, but you know, we'd catch, and he'd say, it ain't big enough boys. Throw it back. And you know we try to win the rodeo. And we were young, and it was the kids division. And um, but when you said Roger, my Uncle Roger, getting back to crabbing and fishing, I forgot to tell you. I remember that - I was a little boy behind the the fuel tanks at, at the marina at the time. They had they called them some – (inaudible). Babin is the cow tongue. Cow lips that we had to tie on the string and we were – we had it in a barrel with salt.

R: Yeah, I've done that.

C: Right. And we had to pull that out .

R: Pull that...

C: Right and we had – my dad and all would crab – we were little boys sitting in the front, and you know the good thing about it is we never had a life jacket – my dad threw us off the boat with a rope around us to teach us to respect the water.

R: Well one thing I remember your Uncle Roger saying and I didn't quite understand what he meant.

C: Okay.

R: He said something about using a ping pong paddle. Do you remember ever using that kind of thing? He had a brick on the bottom, and like, um, a weight or something, and then uh, a chicken neck or something, and he was just picking up the crab with the bait on it, and just boom! With a ping pong paddle.

C: Well I never heard that.

R: That's news to me. But anyway, um, back to the passes. Um, did they look the same at that time...

C: Oh, no. the passes today is much in fact – you know as mayor, I'm trying to close, find a way to close it up. But I remember my mama telling me that Grandmother used to ride in the pirogue with her boyfriend at the time, and it was just a little bitty gap. And they'd go to like Elmer's island and whatever, just a little bitty gap.

R: Leon was telling me that Bayou Rigaud actually goes into Barataria Pass. It's not really Barataria Pass – a lot of people have said that, so I kind of need to clear that up, you know.

C: Yeah. Um, and again, the boat passes are getting wider by the day, you know, until you're rocking on both sides, because I know um, since I've been a little boy, I guarantee you it probably got 15 to 2,500 feet wider. You know.

R: Wow.

C: That's how wide it got.

R: Both passes?

C: Well the fort was always there, and the Coast Guard in the early 70s put rocks, and it varies. It shifts around, and but they they pretty well got – Caminada really got wide.

R: Really – In terms of current, would you say that Barataria is stronger than Caminada?

C: Yes. Deeper and stronger. Yes, sir. But uh, you know the Brazilian shrimp - the brown shrimp is you know, um, that's the capital shrimp of the world. I mean right here in Grand Isle believe it or not.

R: Yeah.

C: It's called Brazilian Brown shrimp in May season, and getting back to my grandfather caught the most shrimp – one of them, one of the best fisherman at the time. Um, it's still today the brown shrimp capital of the world right off of Grand Isle.

R: Is that a bay shrimp?

C: Yes, it's a bay shrimp. But the only problem is you know if you don't come in with a dredge or something and come back and build these incubators so these shrimp can, can come back and put their (inaudible) along the bank, to be protected, um, you know, we're losing them islands by the day. I can remember one of the most beautiful islands is called Bird Island. It was in the back bay. I remember my aunt, my mom my sister's husband had an old lugger, and every Sunday we'd take all of us in the lugger and my mama and all would be in the back of the cabin of the boat cooking rice and cooking beans and all that, and we'd go throw the anchor on that island – we'd all swim, spend the day. And enjoy just the birds – just like ya'll seen earlier today, but it was not no pelicans. This was every type of turn, this was every type of egrets...

R: Oh yeah, ....

C: It's a lot of nests – it was unbelievable. And we used to get the eggs and they'd come home and pick them and all that – I remember we used to pick the eggs and it was – um...

R: While we're – you mentioned lugger. Let me ask you this – I know this is before your time. But before they had motorized luggers, there was a sailing lugger.

C: Exactly.

R: I've seen a lot of pictures of luggers. Right around, you know Cheniere Caminada, and all that. Can you say anything about that?

C: Well, I'm glad you brought that up. I have one of the original pirogues right now that was um, still has the hole in the bench where the sail used to go. And um, one of the gentlemen of Grand Isle had it underneath his home since Betsy. That was donated to him. And after Katrina, I went in his yard, and he said, I have a dugout pirogue. And I said, what's that hole in that bench? He said that's what they used

to sail. And one of the owners before that had sold - gave the pirogue to Old Man Ludwig to get some groceries. And I have that pirogue today.

R: I think this is pretty important to say on tape. If I understand this correctly, a pirogue had a sail in it?

C: It was – just vision a dugout pirogue and when you brought that up you've seen pictures of some of the vessels before. What they did in the olden days – we understood it was a bench across where you sit at, and there's another bench in the front. And there was a hole in the middle, and they had a pole going up with a little sail coming out. And he was in the back on the - and he would go with the wind instead of paddling. And, and I was – I didn't know what that hole was for until Mr. Laymond uh, that's another man and you need to talk to Laymond Savoie.

R: Yeah, we talked to seriously 1760s.

C: So Laymond is the one that gave me the pirogue, and he gave me the history behind it. He said that there was a Santini, there was three or four owners before that, but what they did they – he even gave the pirogue up for...

R: Yeah because I noticed they have like a boat-building class at Nicholls.

C: Right.

R: And they build a sailing lugger. It – it's kind of a cross – but I don't know how to describe it. I'm really not a maritime architect or something. But here's a sort of a schooner shape.

C: Yes.

R: You know, and it's sort of uh, got a little cabin, you know.

C: I thought I had some pictures of which...

R: Well I need to rewind the tape a little bit

C: Some old pictures here. That's some pictures of Judge Adams.

R: Let me go ahead and rewind this tape.

C: One of the things is um, going seine – catching Tremaux nets, which is the nets to catch fish. And my uncles, my dad, and my grandfather and um, my grandfather used to say uh, in French, ?? *le vomit*. That means watch the vomit. I'm looking – I'm looking at my dad – my dad – I was the youngest one. He was in the front of the boat, and um, he said, when I tell you to jump, you're gonna jump with the stick with the back of the boat, so uh, I must've been three and a half foot tall, four foot tall, shortest one ou the bunch, but anyway, um, he was standing in front of the boat, he would hit with his feet, you know, on the boat, and if they had any fish around, they would start moving. And my grandfather could see, and he just about can tell how many fish they had. And he could tell us when to jump, when not to jump. But I remember it was cold, it was around the holidays, and I wanted to make some money to buy some Christmas presents. And I went with them. My mother didn't want me to go. Um, when I jumped off of

Elmer's Island that morning, which on Elmer's Island, you have a sand bottom and then it becomes clay going toward Fourchon – that's where the big yellow mouth trout hang around. That's where your redfish and all hang around. Mostly, that's where the schools – at the time. Well my grandfather had it down pat. He knew – anyway, well he hit on the boat and he saw that white foam on the water, and he said, the hollered back, he looked over the back of the boat and he said, T-Dave! Get ready to jump! And uh, when I jumped, I could remember I didn't feel nothing, I could've screamed, he said it was like I jumped in the ice tub of cold ice water. And I mean I felt everything right here. And it was like freezing cold. It was over my head where it was supposed to meet me at my waist. When he told me to jump, I jumped on the outside the bar instead of inside the bar I jumped on the outside the bar to it was deeper.

R: So you could've been in a channel.

C: In a channel, so when I jumped inside the channel, the fish was inside the channel toward the beach, and I jumped – if I'd have jumped maybe three feet more toward the beach, it'd have been up to my waist, but it was over my head. But anyway, I got out the water – I remember jumping out the water and I remember a redfish hitting me right in here. In my stomach. It was unbelievable – it was unbelievable, the fish. So I'm pulling, and the fish was trying to get out, and he made it – he let the net go out, and they made like a half moon, and my dad and all them – they jumped out, but my dad – when he jumped out, he got a run on the beach come help pull on a rope, because I'm coming with the rope. And I remember we caught so many fish – redfish. It was unbelievable, you know, to bring it to the market. We filled up pickup trucks – but we filled up the boat and went back, came back, and in those days, they had a road to Elmer's Island, but uh – my grandpa was kind of a quiet man. He didn't advertise what we caught because Joe Blo and whatever would've found out and but that was one of the memories. Um, I also learned as a fisherman – my dad showed me that whenever you see a, a porpoise on the side of your boat, and it flaps its tail, it means get ready – the wind's gonna pick up. I used to laugh at that. But if she comes – if she comes on the side the boat and flaps her tail two or three times, because a porpoise loves to dive following the waves in front of the boat. And I don't know – it's a myth or whatever, but through my childhood and through my shrimping days, it looks like sometimes it's true, you know. I remember seeing that porpoise during the day. And I remember my Uncle Roger's on the fishing pier, um there was some people from Baton Rouge that was coming in to fish on the fishing pier one night with their rod and reels. And the wind was calm, calm. And with the lights on drawing the bait, I remember this porpoise coming out – I just brought back childhood memories. I said, ya'll don't worry about it. I said, if she flaps her tail on top the water, the wind's gonna pick up. Within an hour, they had whitecaps there. So I – I guess being raised and listen to you know, like – Number one, if you see foam in the water, you gotta – that means there's plenty fish meaning for the redfish. And that means that they were throwing up. And watching the different bottoms of the water, feeling with a pole, and my grandfather and I learned that because I seined after that. I used to feed three different guys with their families – three or four kids. You know, and...

R: You mentioned seine. Would you seine for redfish?

C: Trout, um, and then my dad and I – my dad fell sick, but he was still doing it with me a little bit. But uh, we, we made a living most of the time until, you know, the conservation, and you know, I – not to say the word recreation or sports, but what happened was what destroyed the seining uh, I remember that wasn't long ago either because I used to do it. I ordered my nets out of Memphis, Tennessee. They were 12,00 foot long, a three inch mash, square mash. You could catch a trout, uh, anything under a pound would go through it, so that was the law of the days, so um, what really killed us – is when the guys from Florida came in and showed us about monofilament.

R: The Florida boats?

C: Well – they came in and showed a Cajun coonass, um, you know guys that can show you how to catch everything. And my dad – I'll never forget that my dad said that Son, this is gonna put us out of business.

R: They're gonna fish everything.

C: They're gonna fish – and he was right.

R: Yeah.

C: Um, we went – I went to the legislation – legislators at the time – I wasn't elected, but that's – what probably got me where I'm at today, but I spoke for the fishermen and telling them that we want to make a living, and I could guarantee you I agree with you – that the monofilament shouldn't be allowed in Grand – in Louisiana. Um, Governor Foster had just got elected, I remember he was – with a welding shield. He was a hard-working man. He got elected as governor, but...

C: Looked like a hard working man...

R: Well he's a rich man after, I found out. But anyway, but the bottom line was to go tell the governor that if you take four men – four fishermen, four families away from pulling these sticks on the beach, I could prove to you that just get with Wildlife and Fisheries and use nylon netting, and I said, mash that you want – I could guarantee you that I could help the Wildlife and Fisheries control what type of fish goes out the net.

R: Oh yeah.

C: And at that time, the doctors and the lawyers and the recreation fishermen had the money, and they had the lobbyists, and they killed us. And that's one regret that I have in the fishing industry that, that you know, they – we know the waters, and we only fish the wintertime when the recreation really wasn't that good. And it was a bonus. It was a bonus check for our families right in our backyard. And till today, some of the boys that work for me um, they're - one's a car salesman, the other one's – he was a marine biologist for Wildlife and Fisheries, but he needed to make spare money to raise his family, and he tells that story all the time, he said you know if they'd have listened, you know, to this guy at the time, the governor would listen, it's true what he was saying. He was a marine biologist for Wildlife and Fisheries. Still is. And, and he made extra money with me, but he was also one that was a little smarter

than me that quit me and went buy gill nets and ran the boat by himself. To make quick money. But that destroyed us.

R: Let me ask you this before we move on.

C: Uh uh.

R: Your Uncle Roger had mentioned seining, and they actually quit shrimping. There were so many redfish. And he said they would pick up seine nets and have to be careful because the bottom could burst.

C: Yeah.

R: We're talking tons.

C: Sack – the sack.

R: Can you speak to the – the abundance of – can't have a bed, with the abundance of reds, and you know, schools of trout, and that kind of thing, and...

C: Oh, yeah. And I remember like getting my net, and making sure that when I call Memphis Net Company at the time – that to make sure my bag was big enough – meaning when you're pulling your bag, when you're pulling your net, you got one side it's a pocket. And that's what he was talking about. The pocket on the Tremaux nets or on the seines was – remember Tremaux net is different than a seine. Just picture three inch square mesh but then you got a six inch mesh on the top of it – meaning in front of it. So that bull red or that red would be caught, you would get gilled in that nylon – because he would make a hole in that three-inch mesh because his nose would go through. So when he – if he got gilled in that little nylon, that was a Tremaux net. And then a seine has a pocket – we'd kind of push the fish all the way into the pocket.

R: Mmhmm.

C: And um, I seen us fill up two – in fact, the very first day that I got my net, I paid 5400 dollars for the boat, motor, and trailer, and I paid thirteen hundred dollars - a dollar a foot, for the net. It was with the tax and I'll never forget – it was Memphis now. We went out, my dad and I, and one of my buddies that was in college that was going to get ready to go to college. I'll never forget that. He wanted to make some fast money, so he comes work with us. And we went in the front the water tower, right off the island there was eight good spots you could make a drag. Once you knew the territory, you knew where your clay mud was, in the morning you knew where the tides were running, you knew – moon phases, tides, rough water, muddy water, clear water, you studied every morning you'd wake up, you gotta look at your waters. That's why you're the captain of the boat I guess, and that's why I learned it. And I was a little – I learned it the hard way in the back, but I learned it – my grandfather watching him hit on his foot on the boat – my dad, and they used to call it the (amoux?) Was like stir of - looked like chocolate water – meaning the stir of a fish means took off and it stirred the mud up. And the way my grandpa would hit on the boat – make noise like that, he said that's an amoux, but it aint' enough. There's maybe

two or three – we gotta get a school of them. And that – that’s some of the memories that in fact – my son called me night before last. He’s fourteen. And I was – I told my mother that last night – it’s funny. We talking about this. I said, I’m so excited. That my son - he’s in music, he’s an athlete, but he said, Dad, he said, you got a 28-foot skiff, he said can you and I go shrimping? You think that - I know you were fourteen years old, you ran a boat. He said I’m fourteen and Dad, I don’t know the waters.

R: Back to the basics.

C: He said, can I get it? Paw Paw’s not there- it’s just you and Uncle Don, my brother. He said can I get on the skiff with you and um, and learn the shrimp and learn the waters? And you know that’s - I promised him when he gets out – in eight more days of school, that we’re gonna start doing that. And he said daddy, I understand ya’ll – watched you. He said you know the waters better at night than the daytime. He said, I’m lost in the daytime, how you’re gonna teach me at night? I said, that’s how I learned it – at night. So you know, it’s crazy that the good Lord – my son’s getting out of school, and he’s telling me that on the phone, you know, like dad, I want to learn this, you know. I want to do this. You know, it’s like God saying, you know what? We’re not gonna give up on that.

R: Well moving on.

C: Okay.

R: For a second.

C: Because I know you’re gonna run out of tape.

R: Yeah, I’m thinking about the tape here. Um, any notable experiences with mosquitoes and stories of Jeanne Lafitte?

C: Yeah, I’ll tell you what. Um, going to school here, and right here they had a bunch of old time houses in the back, but we was always told Jean Lafitte left his treasure by the oak tree in the back by the old jail where his little red house was. And I can remember being in school – we were so excited that you know maybe we’d go dig with the other students and try to find it. And then I remember my grandfather telling me in the marsh back there where our duck lease is, which is about fifteen miles from here, it’s called King Ridge. I don’t know if you’re familiar – if you’ve heard stories about King Ridge. King Ridge is where the old people used to go bury their treasures. Um, in the back of Galiano, Cutoff. It’s a ridge in the back of Grand Isle, but it’s about fifteen miles in the back. Anyway, my grandfather used to say that Jean Lafitte also buried - there was a special oak tree in the back of King Ridge, but I never really went – I went back there a few years back, and what my grandfather told me it would’ve looked like – it would – with all the storms, and still, the oak trees, and then the ridge in the back – in the middle of the marsh. Um, he also um, told me there was around Manila Village toward Lafitte on the left-hand side, it’s – if your look at your maps, when you get back it’s called Indian Cemetery. There’s four of them buried there, and it’s on my lease. My duck lease. Um, there’s a little wrought iron fence and they were buried in 1827, 1867, somewhere around there. So what I’m saying – these were Filipino’s that were buried there. So with the ridges, with the oak trees, and knowing the experience with Jean Lafitte, and believe

it or not, we started with the tarpon rodeo getting the kids involved, we had a pirate's night. We had true actors that came in for the tarpon rodeo. I bought my own costume, at Humbug's. I was Jean Lafitte's – one of his pirates, my brother was a pirate, we got pictures in the album there, and we all spent each about four hundred dollars on our costume, and we went and started throwing gold coins in the audience with the kids – giving to the kids, bringing back Jean Lafitte's alive – we just started Tarpon Rodeo we had actors coming from all over different parts of the United States.

R: Well I mean, while we're on the subject...

C: Uh huh.

R: How important do you feel the – well let me say this. How much of the stories of Jean Lafitte do you think are really true?

C: You know, I hear different stories, um, a little boy, um, if you look at the cemeteries in French, you've seen there probably where his best friend was Nez Coupe. And he cut off his nose, Chighizola. Um, you got like Perry Chighizola, was related to - they still have the Chighizolas on the island. Some of the Santinis are here, you know the Plaisances, you know it's all tied in with the pirates. Um, going to school, um, you know, and graduated in the 70s, and going through the early 60s and 50s, you know, (inaudible) that we always listened to the stories, um, I tell my little boy today that the oak tree you see in the back over there at – daddy was always told , there was treasure there. Now don't get me wrong, we had modern equipment and sometimes we'd dig with backhoes and all. Never found it. But just a few years later, um, we found a canon, you know, by the fort, we dug it up and we came back and restored it. Got it right there by the – and I um, one of the things that I can treasure most with Jean Lafitte – would be that we had a class trip that instead of taking a class to the Camen Islands – we were 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> graders, we went across to the fort, and we stayed and slept in the caves. With wood burning, and you know we gathered wood, and we tried to live like pirates. And I remember they had baby bats in there- probably still got them, I'm not sure but...

R: Bats.

C: The bats were hanging in there and we didn't know who that was – I thought it was rats – and you shine a light, and it was an animal hanging upside down, and it freaked us out.

R: Well did he actually – because I've heard both stories. That maybe he lived here in Grand Isle, Grand Terre, or both, you know, where do you think he lived?

C: I, I think he – my experience and my learning with Jean Lafitte – he was , it was like they was always trying to catch him, so he was in different places. You know, you got Carlos Marcello's place right here where I – I didn't know that, when I was a young kid, that Mr. Carlos had bought it, and he had built it, well he had bought it for somebody that was here early 1900s, I didn't know of for instance that they put aluminum foil on the windows so that the submarines couldn't spot – if you had a candle lit, in your living room, and the families that lived on this island...

R: Couldn't see the light.

C: Could see light. So they had aluminum foil – some type of foil on the window with a candle burning – the wife and the kids and all could eat and sleep when the submarines would pass, the ships would pass, the Germans, that they wouldn't see no lights on that island. Knowing there was Americans in there. I learned that with Mr. Joel Lafont told me that story and that's one of my councilman's daddy. Mr. Joe just passed away – he was ninety-somewhat years old. And he said if you ever go look at the windows, go look. You'll probably see some of the silver wrappings on the windows. So you know a little history of everything, this island has got a lot of history down here.

R: I know. Let's talk a bit about hurricanes. Not just the hurricane of 1893 but just about every hurricane. The national academy of sciences says that Grand Isle is affected by a storm once every 2.5 years.

C: Yes.

R: So what would you say about the resilience of the people that rebuild on Grand Isle?

C: Well, let me tell you, um, there's a picture right behind there – right behind your head, that my father lost everything in 1965. That's me right there with the little white pants on top. Um...

R: Oh yeah.

C: That's on LA-1 – he had a restaurant. My father was elected then – he uh, that's him standing on the left side. Um, and uh, that was 1965 for Betsy, and um, you see me standing there, and I remember my dad telling me that I looked at him and said, what we gonna do? He was 37 years old. He said he told my brother and I – he said we gonna go ahead and rebuild. I said, dad, we don't have no insurance or nothing like that. He said it dosent' matter. We're gonna make a living here – we make a living, this where we're raised at, I know what I'm doing to get back in the waters, but getting and knowing, and one of the sayings that my dad said forty years later came back . And I had to use the same saying. People were coming back on the island and after Betsy, and my dad said, um, just remember. It's material things. We can replace it. You didn't lose your family you didn't lose your wife, you didn't lose your kids. I didn't know forty years later after Katrina would hit that I had to look at this young woman and look at her and look at her kids and look at her husband and say first thing she'll look at me and she'll tell me, Mr. David, I don't have anything left. And I knew she doesn't, but I can't lie to her, but I'll tell her, don't worry about that. It's material things. You got your kids, you got your husband, I promise we'll get you back. And, and I guess being a native boy, dealing with the natives on the island, um, you know we used to that type of living. We're you know we're not asking the government to come in. We know they're gonna come in and help us, but when you're a bunch of Cajun and natives, you're gonna help each other, and that's what we did for Katrina. I stayed on my houseboat, had more floor meetings on my little duck boat, if you wanna call it – Uncle Roger, all my uncles that lost everything, they was like zombies, wanted to give up in life. Um, what I'm saying is, it made me a better man in making sure that um, I brought this island back together, and we worked together with the council and the Chief of Police, and made some decisions, I wasn't always - maybe 30%, 40% never right, at the time, but in my heart I felt that it was the right thing to do. Pissed off people, made people happy, but you know what, in the long run, I didn't lose a life...

R: Sure.

C: ...and I got everybody home.

R: Well back to the uh, we're about the same age.

C: Right.

R: When I was a kid, and there was a storm. And there always had a report from the Coast Guard station in Grand Isle.

C: Right.

R: And it was always things like, "The entire island is covered by whitecaps. You can't see anything. The only thing left is the Coast Guard Station. And everybody's on the second floor." And I thought, man those people are either nuts or incredible.

C: And you know what – it's still going on like that. Um, the parish president, Aaron Broussard called me, don't worry about nothing David. You know, uh, the island is gone, and I was in Lockport for Katrina. I flew in a helicopter in 70 mph winds over this island. We had five people here. Okay. Um, and we had five people – and I was more worried about them five people, because I gave them body bags before I left. I said, I'm gonna give you a body bag because this is serious. I gave them the keys to the City Hall, and they saved their lives in here. But in the back of my mind is saying, I put my hand on the bible, and I told God that I was gonna do the right thing. And God, don't let me lose a life. But one of the hardest things is to ask you to leave, as mayor and you telling me, I'm not leaving. And I can't make you leave. Even though it's mandatory, you know, I made all kinds of deals with everybody – they had twenty six of them. And I got every – 21 of them out, except for five. And they wanted to stay. So when you remember that when you got word back, it was like back in Betsy, it was like Andrew, all the storms. Oh, man, Grand Isle's wiped out. Now if you're sitting in North Louisiana, evacuated, you said oh my God, we lost everything. So it's still going like that – it's still like that. But it's not like that. When I told the parish president – I said Mr. President. We have a bunch of power lines down. We have a bunch of whitecaps underneath the homes. I'll remind you – after Betsy, they raised up the houses eight feet. After Andrew, they went up 12 feet. After Katrina, it was an average of fifteen feet.

R: Well I talked to Ambrose Besson, several people talked about being at the Coast Guard Station. Do you have any memories of any specific hurricane where you witness things happen during the hurricane?

C: Yes. Um, I – we evacuated for Betsy, and we went to Westwego. I was a little boy, and Roger, all the Carmadelles got together at my grandmother's house in Avenue A. and I'll never forget um, Nash Roberts with his little black crayon. Circle was a black and white televation. Saying it's not gonna hit – about 10 o'clock that night they're saying it's not gonna be bad. All of a sudden, my grandmother's roof comes off in Westwego. And I remember we all ran, sheets of tin were flying on Avenue A. And I remember running to my other aunt's house which was next door, and we're all piling up. Believe it or not, my Uncle Roger, his wife, Aunt Lois, they forgot their baby in their little, one of their babies –

because it was underneath the table, and that's the young man that ya'll rode in the boat with today – that was Noel.

R: Really.

C: Noel was in that baby crib, and she goes oh! She had five of six of them and she goes, we forgot Noel! So they run back to the house, it was still raining, but he was underneath the table and they grabbed, they grabbed the baby, and I tease Noel. I said sometimes I bet you we should've left you over there. Haha

R: Haha.

C: It was crazy, but it's one of the memories – I was a young boy, and I remember that we all had to run for Betsy.

R: Interesting.

C: And I never, never believed Nash Roberts since. Because he scared the hell out of us.

R: Well Nash is lie proof.

C: When he come back with that gray color, and he just – they just use him, I think even for Katrina they do. And he's pretty accurate. I can't – I can't say nothing bad.

R: Well you know it's always a little waffle.

C: A little waffle. But when I seen him with the black crayon, it brought back memories to me.

R: Okay, in the short time we have left....

C: Okay. Alright.

R: ...um, I want to ask you a little bit about environmental questions.

C: Okay.

R: Um, what would you say, and about the importance of Grand Isle in terms of protection for Louisiana, and national importance, you know. Both in terms of coastal restoration and then this project is on the rising sea level.

C: Right. Um, right now, we've come a long way. Um, it's been a battle for me to, to come in and fight the federal government, but uh, I'm not a sand man because it's like putting sugar in coffee, and I don't believe going knocking on the government. Federal government, our taxpayers money, every six months saying oh Grand Isle's back in the limelight. You know what – um, I went to Galveston to look at that great wall they have. And, and there's any type of cement wall, um, the Corps – you know what, and you start in the middle of the island, and you work as you get millions of dollars, and one day we'll be finished. But Grand Isle's gonna shift no matter what. I'll be dead and gone, you'll be dead and gone, but

it'll shift. It'd all be that barrier island is turtle back, it's all nice drainage system the way it works, um, coming in and the Corps getting ready to spend 25 million dollars to come in a try to put a geo-tube which is gonna be a sock with sand in it. Just picture you're taking a nylon sock and putting sand in it twelve foot high. And it's gonna be covered with sand because you gotta take care of the environmentalists. They got these birds that come in and lay their nests and whatever. But in the meantime, um, you put rocks in the front side, and you put some, maybe some matting on the top of the coming in on the front side, facing the Gulf of Mexico tucked in. Um I think you'd have something there.

R: So that's supposed to increase deposition?

C: Exactly. It worked in Galveston, and some places – when the sack busts, and some of the vessels came back into the gulf and bust the sack, you gotta have that somewhere along the line.

R: Well let me ask you this.

C: Yes sir.

Because I know Kerry St. Pe pretty well.

C: Right.

R: In terms of land loss. We'll say from Golden Meadow to here.

C: Oh, it's unbelievable.

R: ...in the last fifty years. Would you say – is it safe to say fifteen percent of the marsh is gone?

C: Oh easy, easy. Oh yes sir. It's gone – I was telling you Bird Island as a little boy. That was a mile long. Nothing but white you see with the birds. I mean that's all gone. All the little islands. And believe it or not, as Levee Board President and mayor, I have five yellow permits from the Corps to save all them islands that are left that I applied for since, in early 90s. Today, I cry when I walk around it. I said, why can't the government come here and surround these islands? And put some mangroves and bring these islands to when I was a little boy. Let me tell you. That's why New Orleans is an island now. Because what happens is um, as the islands disappear behind us, there's no protection, there's no more, um, incubators for the shrimp – the shrimp and the crabs, and the fish. It – my belief is to take a suction dredge, take some of that sand and start building these islands back, and um, I just surround in the front side of Sand Dollar with some rocks. I took two bales of hay from Ruben St. Pierre and I threw it. Right two years before Katrina, because they were worried about the birds not nesting. Went put it, took the sediment out of Bayou Rigaud, threw it inside the rocks, and threw the bales of hay in there just that – today, it's unbelievable. It was a nesting ground for the birds.

R: Yeah, you had mentioned black mangroves. I noticed – I don't know if they're a project or what, but coming down LA-1, you see black mangroves.

C: Right.

R: So are they working?

C: Well, and they disappear.

R: Oh.

C: And you got the mangroves that sit at the edge of the island, and you got these North winds hitting, but they got so many roots. It's like – it's like you're a hundred years old and you don't want to die. So the last little root, the last little root is holding it. And then you see that little nest of eggs in it. And I said you know, I showed my son that this winter – riding down the little *trenasses*. And the little *trenasses* is the little ditches. I got a little go-devil which before we had to push-pull. And I Told him I said, boy, if your paw paw's still alive to see something like that going in the muddy waters – and what I'm trying to tell you is – I watch it every day. The same spots I hunted thirty years ago is gone. I keep on moving my duck blinds farther and farther to the North, and when you got more salt water coming in, you not gonna have them ducks coming in. Um, I was excited the other day when I went take a ride in the back. Hopefully those storms – the duck grass is there.

R: There are people that say if we lose this island, it won't be very long before the water will be up to Baton Rouge.

C: Definitely. Definitely. And that's why I'm in Baton Rouge fighting and fighting. Yesterday the governor had a – it was 300 million dollar surplus, and North Louisiana senators were fighting us, trying to get a hundred million dollars out of coastal restoration funds to put transportation to blacktop their streets.

R: Do you feel that Bobby Jindal has helped with it?

C: Yes. Since he changed things and moved things around, um, you got a lot less people dealing with permits and taking so long. And that's one of the gripes we told him when he ran for governor – that's one of the things we told the senators and our congressmen, and even when the president's race came, we don't have time no more. No more studies – you know they studied Grand Isle, five years ago. Eight hundred thousand dollars to tell me where to put rocks.

R: Well believe me.

C: Well I'm a coonass engineer. I can tell you exactly what to do.

R: I wish there could give you half the sediment we have.

C: You know what I'm talking about.

R: Yeah. Now...

It's just frustrating, and uh, but Grand Isle ain't going nowhere. It's gonna shift a little bit. It's gonna eat up once and a while, um, but you know it's um, I remember the same Andy Valance used to say he said, when you get on across the bridge, it's getting a little narrow on the left side. That's before they bulkheaded it and you could see the beautiful lot you're seeing. But he said the professional baseball

player, Jose Canseco, can hit a baseball from one end of the island to the other. And I looked at him, and I said, it's true! He could get on the Gulf, hit the ball in the front bay. That's how narrow it's getting.

R: So you think that Caminada will disappear, or stabilize, or what?

C: Well, let me tell you for instance, my dad was trapping, remember, in the Caminada. There was an old man – Mr. Lampton was good friends with my dad from New Orleans. My dad married my mother I think in 1947, somewhere – 1950. That's right – 1950. And my dad – my dad passed away – Mr. Lampton came back from New Orleans. Drove, knocked on my mother's door. He said, I have a survey of Caminada. Of the property that me and my sisters own. It was surveyed in 1978. Today - I bought the property when he knocked on the door in 1997. From 1978 to 1997, Cheniere Camniada - the 1893 storm, where the houses used to be, that's the land I had bought. If you notice on your way out by the old cemetery, the nice piece of property where the grass is cut, where the sand -that's mine. I own it from bay to bay, trying to keep it up. There were 688 feet missing from 1978 to 1997. Since that time, we put rocks to kind of protect it – the whole Cheniere Caminada, that back side, save the cemetery.

R: So Caminada west end too.

C: Right, west end. Now, reminding you – Elmer's island is cut in half too – Elmer's Island is like a buffer zone to protect Caminada.

R: Mmhmm.

C: But that's cut in half.

R: I know. I used to fish there.

C: Right. So I would say that we lose Elmer's Island, if the government don't come in and protect Elmer's Island – put some rocks on the front side, Elmer's island is like a levee system to protect Caminadaville. Cheniere Caminada. It's scary. Well if Cheniere Caminada after the storms flying in many helicopters to evaluate what the situation looked like. I honestly told myself I can't believe that I have a beautiful home on a small little peninsula...

**\*\*Part 2\*\***

R: Okay, here we are again with Mayor Carmadelle in the old Coast Guard Station, and uh, if you would just go through a little bit of scenarios of uh, the rise of the sea level.

C: Well again, you know, um, looking at uh, born and raised on this island, and watching the sea level coming over the island, and watching these major storms coming over the island, um, watching, you know, over the years, especially when like Betsy, major hurricanes coming though. It looks like the storms are getting more powerful, and it looked like the sea rise – looking at the water tables, um, especially in the areas, you know, uh, in the marshes off the coast right in the area. I find that uh, I find that um, you know, in the next fifty years, the next hundred years, probable this island probably won't be here. Uh, looking at the, you know, the sea levels and the elevations um, it looks like the island itself

in some parts is the sinking and um, the water table is just getting higher and higher. I can remember, um, you know, looking at land and looking at the marshes where they had no water before. And now the water's coming closer and closer to LA-1. We keep on raising our highways, but the marshes are sinking, and the water table's coming up. So you know, um, I'm just afraid, and you know, that the, it's not only Grand Isle. We're looking at different parts of um, all along Louisiana coast. You know, you're looking at the predictions that the scientists are saying, and then the water tables, and even with Noah, and all the information we've been getting. Um, we're find that we're sinking by the day. And also um, you know, the water, um, for different – it looked like our hurricanes are getting like more and more major hurricanes. Um, you know, if Katrina would've hit us, we'd have had thirty feet of water. Grand Isle would've probably been cut in five, six spots. So um, you know, I probably won't live a long enough to see Grand Isle washed away, but one major hurricane hits anywhere in the middle of Louisiana, it's gonna wash the whole Gulf Coast. And as the crow flies, um, it's only fifty miles from New Orleans. So um, the government needs to come in and really um, we should've had this wakeup call and spent the right money to protect all along the Louisiana coast – it's just really, really getting serious, and the bottom line – it takes money.

R: I'll get to that hopefully in the next tape. Um, when you see white shrimp being caught in the bays...

C: That's one of the bst seasons we had. This year, um,

R: But that's a sign of salt water intrusion.

C: Exactly, exactly. You know, and I'm glad you brought that up because we used to duck hunt in Hackberry Bay, which is about 15 miles north of here, and Bay Du Chene, Du Cole. Um, we hunted since the early 70s that I can remember the ducks, the pintails, I you know, five six hundred of them in the ponds and we'd get so excited. You know, our dad showed us you know with 5, 6 ponds on the 671 acre – we had a beautiful duck camp. That's some good memories. The salt water intrusion - it's way past that now. Fifteen miles – I still have the duck lease, but uh, we pray for rain, you know, we're hoping that the duck grass grows, one of the major hurricane hits, it takes quite a few years to come back. Um, meaning, um, they – the freshwater that comes in from Lake Salvador coming down toward Grand Isle – um, coming toward Hackberry Bay. You know, my experience duck hunting, and it's been really tough to kill some ducks. And sure – my little boy is, is till 13 years old now, and says dad, where the ducks are at? And I'm telling him stories, and he's looking at me like...

R: North.

C: Yeah, and he's also looking at me like, Dad. The stories you're telling me. No, this is the truth. This is the truth. You know, I remember crawling like an army man with a shotgun with my uncle and my dad, and just looking at all the pintails and looking at the beautiful ducks in the ponds and today, um, my blinds are moved further north on the lease. And then you know, um, we, you know, to illegally um, you're not gonna kill anything being honest. You know, you to draw the ducks you have to – where I like to convince the government that what's the difference of you know, if uh, freshwater's further north, we need to come in and uh, um, you know, get the habitat back like it used to be.

R: I interviewed someone in this project that talked about big chunks of marsh, you need to save that – big chunks of marsh being washed away through the passes, and getting pushed up on the, the beach.

C: Yes.

R: So is that your experience as one –

C: Yes. I'm glad you brought that. When the gulf gets rough or when the north winds blow, you could see the big chunks - or in a major hurricane or low pressure. Whenever the weather's bad, um, you know, I remember my dad used to say that's a *Floaton* – *Floaton* in French. And then all of a sudden you see some islands breaking apart. I can remember Bird Island. We used to go every Sunday. And just – go on the islands and picnic on the shrimp boat. My mother and father would cook, and my brother and sister and all, but we could see these islands breaking apart – especially when the weather was severe. Um, especially when the cold fronts went along, and when you see the islands with from the north, and you'd see bad weather from the south during the summertime. Um, and then the erosion was so bad, and you could see these islands just going out the pass – out of Baratavia and Caminada Pass – and just going out in the gulf. And then when a storm would come, sometimes it would bring parts of the island, maybe from Empire. Maybe from Venice. From the East. Just floating – you see marsh in the middle of the gulf.

R: So you think the marsh came from the islands?

C: Yeah, different parts of the islands, yeah.

R: Okay, so in your lifetime, let's say since 1950.

C: Right.

R: Um, what islands can you say have disappeared?

C: Oh, unbelievable. Bird Island was a quarter of a mile. Beautiful birds, the turn birds, um, they had the mangroves, big mangrove trees for them to turn birds, the pelicans, and you know if the government would've came – if Governor Foster wouldn't have came and rocked around Bird Island, pelicans were gonna be extinct – they spent 700,000 to rock it. You know, being president director of the Levee Board today, we still, since the early - we got created in '92, first thing I did was get permits to rock all these islands, these barrier islands. Um, the islands are disappearing. And to answer your question, I've seen several islands in my lifetime that I – I run over with a speed boat today and tell my son there used to have an island here going to the duck camp. And then just watching all these points and all these islands, um, I can't hardly recognize it, you know.

R: Mmhnmm. Can you tell me, excuse me, some of the names of the islands that disappeared?

C: Well you got like Dutch Island is right here. You got um, Little um, we get different names. Turn Island we named. That you know were listed. Old Man Laonce Cut, that he dug with a shovel, pass with a pirogue. Today it's over maybe a - three quarters of a mile wide. Um, then Bay Marsouin - Bay Marsouin

in French is um, Porpoise Bay, Tee Bay Marsouin is Little Porpoise Bay. That's where the porpoises used to hang around and protected each other. Um, and, and they came in and they would get behind these little islands, and it was like a little shallow bay – you could see the fins and we used to – my dad used to tell us and my uncle used to say that's where the sharks – we were little boys – he said that's where the sharks were nesting. And we didn't know no difference – we saw, it looked like jaws, you know. And you saw the fins in porpoise bay, and um, you know, Bay Levi was named after Levi Collins. That's all gone. Um, you know, looking at uh, Anna's bay which is named after my mother, and father was always shrimping - when they first married – in his shrimp boat. Today, that's open water. And Bay Dislette. Bay Dislette is, is just nothing but water. Um, um, Bayou (Deux?) means very Bear Bayou. That's all open up. Snake Bayou – it does like a snake when I was a little boy, Um, and I could remember just twenty years ago um, going in the marsh and then, what the hell happened. It looked like somebody passed a lawnmower. And what had happened – it was a dead zone in the water that the fresh – the salt water had came in and killed the freshwater plants that used to be there above like where I hunt at. It's a lot of freshwater in the 70s, and today the salt water intrusion's getting closer toward New Orleans, it's really killing some of the, you know the freshwater flowers and plants that we had.

R: Well let me ask you this. You mentioned Lake Salvador.

C: Right.

R: In the 50s and 60s, on the sides of it, was the Lake a Coastal Prairie?

C: Yes! Talking to my father – my father and all was the trappers and they had the – before the 40s, my dad and my grandfather and all, and it was you know, and you know, from Lake Salvador all the way down, for instance, where we duck hunt at is an Indian cemetery on our lease, and it's on a ridge. So that ought to tell you something that the oak trees – there's one big oak tree still alive. You know why it's alive? Because the oak trees on it – when it rains, it holds the water. All the other oak trees that you see all along Louisiana coast is dead because there's no more fresh water coming to it. Wherever there's a ridge, it makes a little funnel to keep, to keep that fresh water, rain water, in to keep these oak trees alive.

R: Yep. Point au Chene.

C: Point au Chene and all that, and, and Cheniere Caminada. Cheniere where I live at. Cheniere means "ridges". Um, you know, all along on the Cheniere Cemetary, they have an oak tree still there that's dead, but it's still there since the early 1800s. But all the trees along LA-1 going on to Port Fourchon today, is dead. Especially after that hurricane hits with that nine, ten feet of surge that took a beating. Um, so to answer your question, um, you know from Lake Salvador coming – yeah. When I – the ducks everything freshwater – I even caught bass. I remember my sister was a young girl. Today she's forty years old. But she came in and hooked a bass right there in the duck lease.

R: So where would about – where would the coastal prairie end, and the marsh start?

C: Well right now it's above Hackberry Cay. Coffee Bean they called that. Toward Coffee Bay and Lake Salvador. Um, now the Davis pond project is centered freshwater segment – sediment – coming in right there out of St. Charles Parish – coming in to lake Salvador – thank God the government did that – that's kind of keeping that area a little freshwater coming in and sediment and we've seen a difference – hopefully there that freshwater does come in. But without the Barrier Islands that's disappearing from Hackberry Bay to Grand Isle. Meaning Dutch Island, Matagorda Island, we call it, Turn Island, all these islands are disappearing every day. Um, there's not much left of these islands, you know.

R: Do you know Kerry St. Pe? With the Barataria-Terrebonne...

C: Yes! I know Kerry very well.

R: I taught – good friend of mine as well. I talked to Kerry many times. And uh, you know, uh, how things are in Louisiana. Politics in Baton Rouge. Kerry has always gone back to pipeline slurring.

C: Exactly.

R: Vacated pipeline slurring. And I agree. I mean, um...

C: Pipes are there.

R: You know, like he said, we can turn this system fresh overnight.

C: Right.

R: But we can't get the sediments down there.

C: Right.

R: You know, that's the thing.

C: That's right.

R: So how would you feel about a pipeline that could rebuild, you know, like rebuild the ridges and sort of literally tracing the most subsided areas? You know....

C: Yeah, and I agree with Kerry. He made a wonderful speech the other day. Uh, friends of Grand Isle, and he explained um, what needs to be done. And you know we have many abandoned pipelines that cut across the marsh. Um, you know, all from New Orleans, St. Charles parish, Lafourche parish, that um, when we ran the water line it was looked at to use an abandoned pipeline. And in the back of my mind, I said, this is the thing. This is the ticket. Come in and put a dredge on one end, and re-cut the pipeline where needs to be dredged. Dig your channel so your fishing vessels could go through the channels. You could go from Barataria Bay, starting from Crown Point on Barataria coming on down and keep your dredge...

R: It makes perfect sense. The only thing that he told me was that the Army Corps said to him was that they'd need a pump every couple of miles, and it was really costly to do that.

C: Yeah, but I mean, at least you see something in your lifetime.

R: Haha, yeah.

C: You know what I'm talking about? It's talk.

R: It's better to rebuild the marsh than a levee.

C: I think – I mean I really get excited when I see they're dredging the gulf – rebuilding the beach – because I know there 's more land – more protection for us.

R: Oh yeah.

C: So just picture having a dredge in the back pumping 24 hours, you know, let the government come in instead of each individual lobbying for the community, and just put a band of pipelines – maybe from one end of Louisiana to the other – just pick out of you know, one in each parish. At least do something. You know.

R: Well my idea was - of course never fly but my idea is to rebuild the barrier islands by sinking barges and pumping the full of concrete.

C: Well I mean, that –

R: Then rebuild the marsh.

C: Well, you can, you know and look they got many ships in Beaumont that's abandoned. We looked at that. Coming in and protect some of them islands. Mr. Broussard, the parish president, you know, they're the ones to start a program where we come in and put these ships, but by the time – um, DEQ was looking at all that and there was – what type of metal with the ship – how much lead paint, and you ain't got time for all that. It's, you know, if you're gonna do it, let's do it, like you said. Take the barges and – but by the time that you know everybody get their hands in, and it takes one environmentalist to shut a project down, and that's my experience, and I stayed away from it because it was always something, something.

R: Right.

C: And I Think the true thing is put a dredge on the other side of an abandoned pipeline. Put a portable um, uh, flexible hose and shoot it all day long, shoot it to the left, to the right, and, and come back and say you know what, maybe one day I could tell my son, this is where Bird Island, this is where the map was, and son, we're rebuilding it as we speak.

R: And THEN open Davis Pond.

C: Exactly, exactly. Uh, let the sediment come in, uh, but I mean with all the channels that gotta be dug, you're right. That would be a quickest way. That pipeline might be a quarter of a mile away – it might be two thousand feet away.

R: They could rebuild the whole coastline in two years.

C: If some engineer – I'm not an engineer; I'm a Cajun engineer. But I know that some engineer could take an abandoned pipeline – might be two miles away and do a flexible flange hose and put it with some type of dredge – the – dredge in the channel, and when he unclamps it – at least he – that pipeline's still buried, but we used it, and move on.

R: Well it seems to me that the biggest problem has been the politics in Baton Rouge.

C: Mmhmm.

R: Um, you need tape end? Because what they really want is more Houma navigation canals. It supports big business.

C: Right.

R: Getting stuff off to the gulf quicker.

C: Right.

R: But more salt water intrusion coming into the marsh – I remember - they went dredge Bayou Chene, Bayou Black, and I think it's Bayou Bess. And uh, that was back in the 70s, early 80s, and um, one guy who could've stopped it – President Carter stopped it.

C: Right, right.

R: The basis of - it was solely to promote and protect private business, and that served to do nothing but degrade the coast.

C: Right.

R: But I ask you um, oysters, clams, that is the foundation of the Barrier Islands. All this seemed to start in the 20s when they started dredging and dredging the Barrier Islands for roads.

C: And I'm glad you brought that up. I remember going with Mr. used to call him, um, Pagais. He had hands that probably three times the size of my hands – but a big solid Cajun man. Building shrimp boats and all, but he was a solid man and I used to go – he used to go, come on you're gonna catch oysters with me. And I was a little boy, and I remember going, in Cutoff of Bay Tombeaux they call it. And I know all the old names because I was raised by my grandfather my daddy's a shrimper. And you could take them tongs – they come back and took eight feet of water, six feet of water, he'd stand on a boat, and he'd take them tongs and dredge and pull that up, and put two or three sacks of oysters at one time and threw them in a back of the boat. I've seen that with my own eyes. And I – you know, and today, all them islands are gone where that man used to know where all them little points were at. The wild oysters grew, and um, you know, it, it takes a bed for the oysters to grow. A lot of fishermen today gotta go all the way across the river, get the seeds, come all the way back and make their bedding grounds, and watch the snails eat it. Before, they were all over – the wild oysters. I remember my daddy used to

pick 25 sacks, load them in a garbage, uh, garbage, uh dump pickup truck, go all the way across the Sunshine Bridge and sell them, to Emile's restaurant.

R: In all the islands you mentioned, were the oysters primarily on the North Side?

C: Yes.

R: Yeah.

C: Yes. North side of it. For some reason. Um....

R: Freshwater.

C: Freshwater, and you know the gulf was getting a little closer every time. Getting a little closer. And my dad had a lease, my uncle had a lease, we used to jump on the boat, if a cold front hit, if the tide was low, you go to pick up five, six sacks, bring it home, open it, and then when the pipelines came in, they put clam shells on both sides. And the oysters really took on clam shells. And we used to go pick up – we used to call them little pipeline oysters. And, and man that was the type that you – they were real purple in shells – you don't see none of that no more.

R: No, tasted real salt.

C: And then I – to eat them raw, I ate so many in my lifetime, I don't eat them no more. I eat them fried. But, but that's what we lived off of – seafood, you know, shrimp – you used to watch the grass shrimp jumping on the little wheel wash – you make a little weave along the bank – my dad with a spotlight at night. And my dad said, well if ya'll see them jump – me and my brother were sitting in the back of the boat fan tail of the boat. And my dad would holler, okay boys, you got a spotlight. The headlight connected to the battery. And he said boys if you watch them jump, we're gonna make a circle and we're gonna throw our net to catch them. That was all along the Louisiana coast them little islands. It could've been any one of them islands – but them islands are gone. So you know, I just feel that by the islands gone and watching erosion, you know, the incubators gone for all our seafood industry. That's the incubator I find that's gone, you know. So um, I'm really concerned – I'm really concerned for the future of the island. You know.

R: How we doing on time?

C: Um, a couple of – ten, five more minutes – something like that.

R: Okay. Well, this will be one tape. Um, what I think we pretty much have covered most of coastal erosion. Do you have anything else that you'd like to say?

C: Well, and again, you know, we fight it every day, and I'm just tired of you know, begging the government uh, you know, here we are today in we're still you know we improving, we're getting some money in but it's taking too long. I find it just takes too long to convince the government, um, to – by the time you get your permits, um, I – I think the only thing that could save us is getting a dredge in here and start building the islands back like we talked about. And just finding a lump sum and get every

parish president, and – along the coast, and just get one dredge and at least you know in my lifetime, you know, um, that I – I repeat that over and over; I'm kind of like Kerry St. Pe. At least you could see the islands coming back, you'll see the birds nesting, you'll see the oyster fishermen a little more happy. You'll see the fishermen all along the community. You'll see the recreational fishermen. Everybody would benefit from that. Just trying to catch things in open water with these, you know, shrimp, crabs, and fish, and oysters don't have no place to hide, or you know, the mama shrimp, you know, the oysters and whatever – the crabs; there's no protection for these things no more, and I just feel to protect the natural resources, we gotta create more islands.

R: I remember last time we talked, you mentioned that the island shifts.

C: The sand does shift.

R: All islands shift. So would you say it's shifting from east to west?

C: You know, in different ways. It depends on how a hurricane hits us, you know.

R: Mmhmm.

C: Um, now we having some serious erosion on the west side. Um, and then always had erosion on the, on the, like the middle of the island for some reason since the early 50s. They made a man, man made ball – jetties, and then they came back with wooden jetties, and it really worked, and the old people believed in it, they kept the beach built up. Government pulled that out and put rocks across the island, and it's still scouring in that, so nobody really figured out the scouring in that middle of the island. You know, all these years. So I think it's just because of the currents, you know, the way it moves back and forth. And also um, I really think the government needs to come back and put the wooden jetties, but not wooden, out of rocks going north to south. Different parts of the island, and putting some teardrops in-between, um, you know Andy Valance had a good idea. He put the rocks in the middle of the island and it worked. Still there today. Twelve feet of water- I was there when they put the rocks in the middle of the island and it worked. The government never looked at it – never wanted to continue putting it.

R: So what about on the North side of where these jetties are?

C: Well, we did that to protect what we have. Um, you know, for these jetties to work, rougher it gets, the water turns like chocolate milk. They have sediment in it that goes behind the rock and it settles. So, but that's many years – that's been there since the early, late nineties – we put the first rock segment, and it's really building up. It's really building up, um, behind the rocks. You could see some sediment starting to build up. Well that's long term, but in between all that, um, thank God we put the rocks because the erosion with the North Wind, them major storms going to the east of us – like Katrina, it blew 178 miles an hour for 7, 8 hours out the North.

R: Here?

C: Yeah, because it passed to the East of us. So Grand Isle took a beating. Now for Betsy and Gustav and Ike, it came directly from the South. Whenever a hurricane hits the east side of us, we get serious winds out the north because it's wrapping and it's passing to the east of us pushing water from Lafitte...

R: North, yeah.

C: And, and from really Hwy 90 all the way down. You know, and so we really take a beating, so not only north winds, whatever storm, we pray that it goes to the east or west of us, the Grand Isle does take a beating out the north side. So we get hit in many ways and different ways.

Well you tell us some really nice stories about – and this is really historical being in the whole Coast Guard here. Um, can you tell maybe one more?

C: Um, you're talking about in the coast guard station?

R: Yeah.

C: Okay, you know, um, you know, listening to the old timers, I remember um, in 1965 when Betsy hit, there was quite a few people who couldn't afford their big families to get away. And I heard some stories about what Betsy hit that, you know, the wind was about a hundred – it blew the meter off at 165 miles an hour, and, and some of my good friends stayed here. And they said that the water was coming up, the animals and the horses and everything went save themselves on the Catholic church on the steps. The Catholic church – the old Catholic church before they built the new one after Betsy. Um, and they could hear the animals screaming and hollering because their footsteps had broke the steps and got caught. And some of the men left out of City Hall and they went to undo them animals so they wouldn't drown. And, and um, many of the coffins and everything floated away, and the families came back and went in the marsh – the fishermen had found some of the coffins later. Um, you know, I remember coming on the island, you know, um, there was a cypress tree at the Fourchon curve, which is about eight miles from our home in Cheniere. My dad and my mother and my brother and I walked that, and we're um, I could remember we walked that and my mother started crying when she seen that we didn't have nothing left. No restaurant, and no um, no home. But my brother and I were too young – we wanted to know why my mother was crying. She sat us in the Cheniere cemetery that was hit. The people buried since 1893 – she sat on the tomb and took groceries out the – brown paper bag, and it was Vienna sausage and bread, and hot cokes, um, my brother and I – she made a sandwich. Her brother – she made a sandwich. And um, we ate Vienna sausage, and we took a little break, and as we walked about a thousand feet, my mother and my father was crying and saying that there was nothing left. And my dad looked at us, and said, it's material things, and we're gonna start all over again. And we couldn't understand why my dad wanted to stay there, but now we see why. Who would've thought that the Good Lord had come forty years later, and Katrina hit us, and walking with a bunch of men and taking a break – guess where we took a break. We took a break at the same cemetery. And when they took the cases of food out, it was Vienna sausage. The only thing different – our drinks had - was iced up in an ice chest. And I sat and I told these men the story that my mother fed me here forty years later and today I'm a leader. And I'm telling these guys – when they say, Mr. David, you have nothing left. And I can remember I felt like Jesus Christ talking to all his disciples and telling them, let's pray, guys. We gotta

bring our community back. And I can remember telling them the story about my mother feeding me when I was nine years old, and forty years later, I come back, and I'm eating the same food. Vienna sausage, but it had a better taste because we got to kill it with mustard. And the bread was fresh and the cold drinks. I'd have never thought in my lifetime that I'd eat the same food that the Good Lord would come um, and I had to tell all these young men that it's material things – we didn't lose a life, and don't worry about nothing – we're gonna make sure everybody has a new home.

R: That's right – that's hurricane food.

C: You know, that's one of the things that I've treasured my whole life – that why did the Good Lord come back and, and made me sit in the same tomb that my mother preached to me and my brother – that amazing. That's some of the stories that I sat and I told all them guys, and them young boys were crying because they just had borrowed all this money and lost everything. And I told them, it's gonna be okay, guys. It's gonna be okay. Because we went through it. Um, my brother and I and my family went through it. And we rebuilt the homes, and I've seen my daddy do that at 37, so that's what we're gonna do. so that's one of the things that, you know, that making sure I came back and you know, everybody that evacuates um, since the Town Hall's been built, I give them the keys – when I left for Katrina at 10:30 at night – the seven that stayed – they stayed right in this building. The building is strong. It took a beating, you know, the core...um, the core rods inside the poles – that really salt water got into them, and it's making it weak, and we're hopefully getting some funding from FEMA to come back and restore this building. So that's some of the things that um, you know, as long as I'm mayor, you know I'll make sure that my job is to put my hand on the bible, do the right thing every day, and don't lose a life. Especially where we live on this island. We're surrounded by water, we're vulnerable for weather, from north winds to hurricanes. Um, but we Cajuns and we're not going nowhere.

R: Well you're certainly, um, great spokesman for the people, um, and uh, but let me ask you one last question.

C: Okay.

R: Um, the rise of sea level. Um, I guess there's nothing we can really do about the rise of sea level. Is there anything you can say about that?

C: Um, no, I just, again, like I said earlier, you know the rising sea level it's there, it's coming every day, and um, I don't know – I don't want to accept that. I mean I just hope that the Good Lord or the government some or one of us – whatever– all of us together – that, I don't just can't see Grand Isle gone. I mean, but in the back of my mind, in my heart, is that one day, um, and it really woke – what really woke me up is that Katrina hit, Mississippi had 30 feet of water. So um, I just find hurricanes are getting more powerful, and it looks like the land is sinking, and the sea level is rising. Um, I guess the water's gonna take over one day all over in Southeast Louisiana. Um, I guess going to Galveston after Hurricane Ike and listening to the stories in the 1800s – these guys are smart. They came in and they raised up Galveston, and put up a sea wall, and we - maybe we should've listened to them in the 1800s, and you and I wouldn't have been worried about the rising tide – especially in Louisiana.

R: They have a very limited space.

C: Right.

R: It was easy to do that.

C: It was easy, and us, we're so wide, and so long.

R: We're under the gun in a number of ways.

C: Exactly. Um, and I guess people in North Louisiana, and even to the North states wonder why we want to keep on living here, but um, man we're making a living here. We were raised as quiet and there's no crime, you know, we're not begging for the government to you know, feed us or anything like that. We could make our living right off the waters. And keep – you know, between our oil and gas, and between the shrimp and the fish and all the natural resources we have, you know, they shouldn't even be asking us that. They should be helping us protect us a little more – especially in the wintertime, to get that, that natural gas up there – the heating systems for them. You know, that's one of the resources, and the shrimp, the fish and the crabs go all over the United States. So I guess the other question is why you keep on building in Oklahoma and Kansas City – when there's tornadoes every day. So that's all over the country. There's earthquakes in California – put a television every day – there's a little minor earthquake or a major earthquake, so no matter where you live at, um, the government still comes in and tries to keep the community strong, and I think as far as losing land, and I think we should build some type of sea wall and dredges on the North side of all these islands and bringing these islands back – and spending the money the right way. And, and knowing that – I could see my lifetime that these five, six islands – are back, that I could show my little boy on my dying bed that you know, what, son? Go plant the mangroves that keep the, the birds there.

R: Thank you Mayor David Carmadelle.

C: Thank You.